

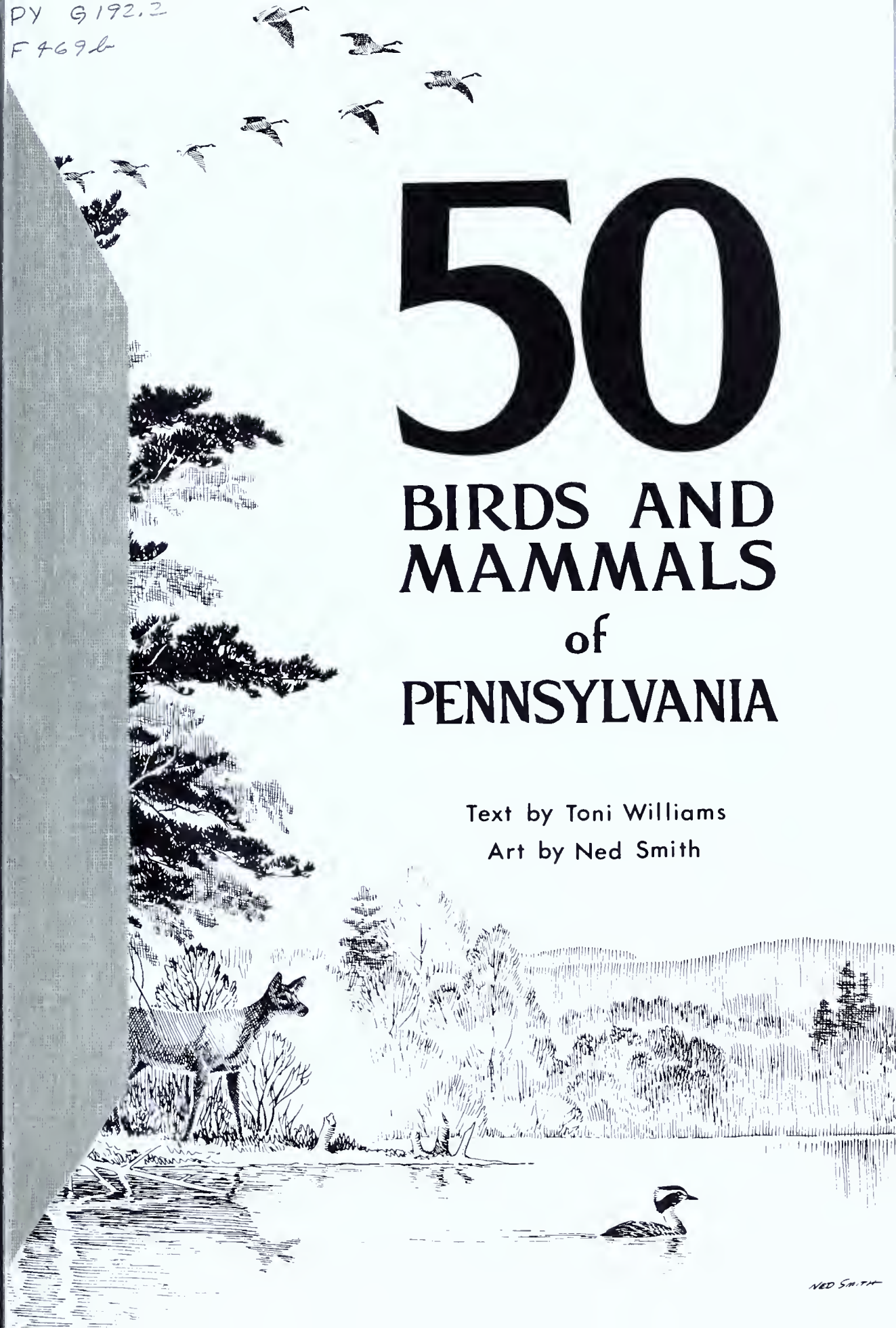
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BIRDS AND MAMMALS of PENNSYLVANIA

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Art by Ned Smith



OUR KEYSTONE STATE is aptly named in many ways, for it's in a central position biologically as well as historically. Southern animals approach their northern limits here, and northern animals their southern boundaries. Besides the many species which live here all year, others migrate through or visit during severe northern winters. Pennsylvania bridges from the Great Lakes almost to the Atlantic, and is split by the ancient Alleghenies. We have lakes, forests, bogs, rivers, meadows, ponds and marshes. This precious diversity of habitat allows the variety of birds and mammals which add so much to our joy in living. If we preserve this diversity and protect it from pollution, we may still enjoy the same whippoorwills, flying squirrels, eagles, black bears, sandpipers and all our other wildlife 50 years from now.

If you want to learn more about Pennsylvania's birds and mammals, the Game Commission offers several leaflets, books and charts. Write for a publication list to: Pennsylvania Game Commission, P.O. Box 1567, Harrisburg PA 17120.

RUFFED GROUSE

Our State Bird. In other parts of the country, grouse may be called "partridge." Ruffed grouse weigh about 1½ pounds on the average. The predominant color may be gray or reddish-brown. Nests on the ground, often at the base of a tree; one brood per year. The male displays to attract females: he fans his tail, erects the black ruff on his neck, and beats cupped wings to make a booming sound, called "drumming." Food: buds, fruits and leaves of aspen, birch, beech and maple; grapes, other fruits and nuts. Grouse populations peak about every 10 years. Game bird.



WHITE-TAILED DEER

The whitetail, which had virtually disappeared here by 1900, has become a common sight across the state through careful management, including regulated hunting. Male deer, or bucks, shed their antlers yearly and grow a new set each spring. Well nourished females (does) often have twin or triplet fawns every year. In spring and summer, deer eat green plants; in fall and winter they switch to acorns and other nuts, twigs and buds. If fed rich food such as corn in winter, they may get sick and die. Like cattle, deer are ruminants. The whitetail is our State Game Animal.



BARN SWALLOW

This common swallow is the only one with a deeply-forked tail. Its back is a lustrous blue-black; its forehead and throat are rusty and its belly buff. Lively fliers with long, tapering wings, barn swallows maintain an almost constant twittering as they chase after airborne insects. Their mud nests are often attached near rafters of old barns which they can fly in and out of easily; modern barns are less hospitable. Abundant in Pennsylvania except in winter, when swallows fly south.

EASTERN CHIPMUNK

Most Pennsylvanians know this pert little mammal, who's active during the day and inhabits all sorts of areas, from woods to rock gardens. "Chippies" dig long, complicated burrows where they sleep and bear young, 3-5 per litter, born naked and blind. They sit on stumps, rocks, etc. to eat seeds, nuts, berries, insects and small snakes. They store food for winter, when they sleep soundly except on warm days when they may frisk about. Chipmunks spend most of their time on the ground rather than in trees. They are 9-10 inches long, including tail, and weigh about 3-4 ounces.



KILLDEER



Golf courses are a favorite hangout for this bird of open fields. Although it's a shore-bird, the killdeer is often found far from water. A loud clear *kill-DEEE* may attract your attention before you see the brown-and-white bird with a double black "necklace." Lays eggs (usually four) in a slight, shallow scrape in dirt or gravel. If disturbed near the nest, the female will pretend to be injured in order to lure a potential predator from the nest area. An insect-cater, the killdeer is the farmer's and gardener's friend.

WOODCHUCK

The woodchuck, or groundhog, is the largest member of the squirrel family. Chucks are usually found near farmland but may dig burrows in the woods. These later become homes for many animals, but cause problems for farmers. The grizzled brown 'chuck, about two feet long and weighing about 10 pounds, whistles when alarmed. He eats grasses, clover, alfalfa, plantain, apples, beans, corn and other plants. Young are born blind and naked in April, 2-6 per litter. A true hibernator. Woodchuck meat is edible.



AMERICAN ROBIN

Perhaps the first bird most people learn to recognize, "robin redbreast" is a brown bird with darker head and tail and a rusty-red breast. The male's breast in spring is the most vivid. The robin's call is a series of chirps, rising and falling. Food: earthworms and insects. Young robins often fall out of their nests and die, but robins produce so many young each year that the population remains fairly stable. Nests are of mud and grass, in a tree or on a ledge. These nests are protected, as are those of most songbirds, by federal law.



BOBCAT

Pennsylvania's only wild cat, the bobcat is smaller than many folks imagine—little larger than a big housecat. It feeds mainly on small mammals such as mice, rats, voles, rabbits and hares, as well as on birds. Once quite common in the state, the bobcat population has declined since the 1920s. Favored habitat of brushy forest has matured across much of the state, leaving them with fewer places to live. Most bobcats are found in the wilder parts of the state. The bobcat was declared a game animal and given total protection here in 1970.



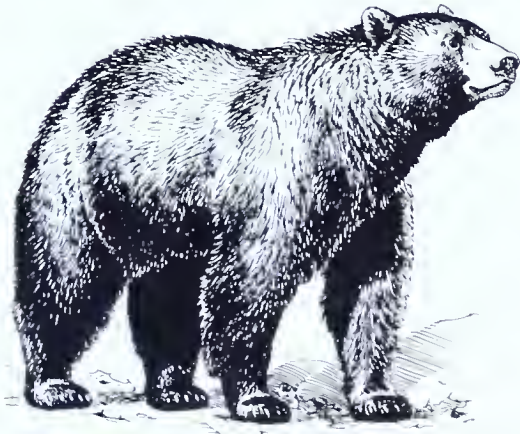
MALLARD

Best-known of our waterfowl, mallards may remain here all year where water is free of ice. The male (drake) has an iridescent green head, white neck band and reddish chest; the hen is mottled brown. Both sexes have a bluish-purple patch on the wings, called a speculum. Eight to 10 eggs are laid in a nest on the ground. Food: mostly aquatic plants, some grain, insects and small fish. Call is a loud *quack*. Wild birds may join domestic ducks, and may interbreed with domestic or other wild ducks. Duck hunting is regulated by state and federal laws.



BLACK BEAR

The only species of bear in Pennsylvania; most common in northcentral and north-eastern counties. Some are brown ("cinnamon") rather than black. Prefers forests, dense swamps; sometimes visits farmlands. Bears eat almost anything, including garbage, and will freeload if given a chance. One to four cubs are born while the female is in winter den. Most females have cubs every other year. Bears don't truly hibernate, but sleep soundly in nests or dens in hollow stumps, caves and under trees. Average adult weights: male, 150-400 pounds; female, 115-200 pounds.



HOUSE SPARROW

An introduced species, the common sparrow of cities and towns, this bird belongs to a different family from our native sparrows. This one came from Europe in 1852, and was first seen in Pennsylvania in 1868. Like the starling, it's an aggressive bird with few natural enemies in this country, and has multiplied enormously. This sparrow is common in farmyards, eating spilled grain. The male is a dapper-looking fellow with black throat, white cheeks, gray head and rusty neck. Females and young are an undistinguished brown streaked with buff.





PORCUPINE

The "porkie" is one mammal most people recognize—his quills (really modified hairs) are an outstanding feature. They stick into just about anything that brushes against them, and are hard to remove. The porcupine eats almost any kind of vegetation, and in winter will eat twigs or the inner bark of trees. He may gnaw on wooden tools or buildings, to the owners' dismay. A creature of forests, the porkie is most active at night. Under the quills he's about the size of a large housecat. Females usually have one baby every year or two.

CHIMNEY SWIFT

The name's appropriate, for this is a very fast flier which roosts and nests in chimneys as well as air shafts, hollow trees, silos and wells. Like nighthawks, they're most obvious during feeding flights at dusk, but these birds are quite different from nighthawks. They're smaller, and their flight is much more erratic, like a high-speed, fluttering roller-coaster. The call is different, too: a high-pitched, chattering *chip-chip-chip*. Wings are long and narrow, gray-black like the rest of the bird. It feeds almost entirely on insects.



SHORT-TAILED SHREW

Heavyweight of Pennsylvania's seven shrew species; tips the scale at half an ounce. A common mammal in the state, but more likely to be heard (as a tiny rustle in fallen leaves) than seen, due to its size and shyness. Extremely active and a voracious eater, it consumes at least its own weight every day in insects, spiders, snails, millipedes, slugs, etc. Its saliva is poisonous to small animals but harmless to man. The velvety gray-furred shrew has a very pointed snout and tiny front feet, unlike the heavy spade-shaped feet of the mole.

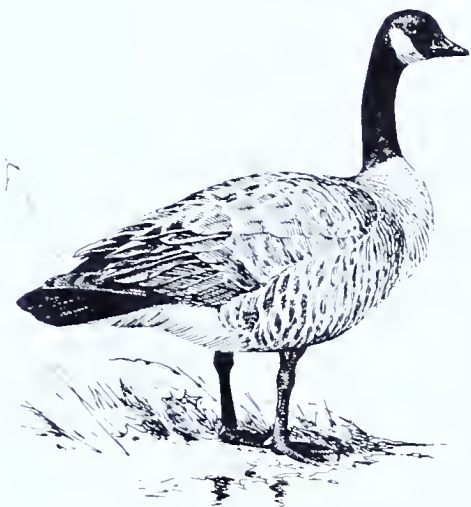


EVENING GROSBEEK

Most often seen in winter at the backyard feeder—some years quite common, other years absent. When it does appear here, it's most easily attracted by sunflower seeds. About the same size as the cardinal, with whom it may be seen at the feeder, the grosbeak's black, white, and yellow are nicely set off by the cardinal's red. In both species, the female's color is duller than the male's. Outside the backyard, its favorite habitat is coniferous forests, its favorite food the seeds of box-elder. Call is a loud *chirp*.

EASTERN COTTONTAIL

The rabbit's legendary love for vegetables gets him into trouble with home gardeners. But, along with voles and mice, rabbits are a vital part of Pennsylvania's food chain. They're taken in large numbers by foxes, hawks, owls and other predators; to make up for this, their breeding rate is also legendary. With suitable habitat, including escape cover, rabbits flourish despite animal predation and hunting. Cottontails are most active at dawn and dusk. Young—up to 6 or 7 litters a year—are born naked and blind.



CANADA GOOSE

Along with turkeys, our largest game birds. With careful management, the population nationwide doubled between 1955 and 1975. Both sexes have a brown body and black head and neck, with a white cheek patch. Some Canadas winter here; most migrate in V formations, honking loudly. Adults mate for life, breeding when three years old. They nest on the ground near water, and readily use artificial nesting devices. Food: aquatic plants, roots, grains and insects. May bother landowners by grazing heavily on fields near wetlands.

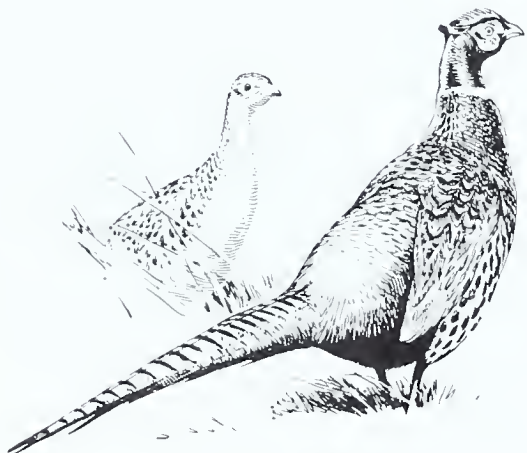
LITTLE BROWN BAT

Our most common bat, especially around suburbs and towns. A tiny mammal, its body is only about 2½ inches long, with a 10-inch wingspread; it weighs but a quarter of an ounce. In winter, these bats hibernate in caves; in summer, males wander while females form nursery colonies, sometimes in attics or barns. They're usually harmless, and eat vast numbers of insects, but their roosts may stink. The only way to keep bats out permanently is to close *all* openings bigger than ¾". Bats leave roosts at dusk, flying for hours catching insects by echolocation (like sonar). One young per year.



RING-NECKED PHEASANT

This popular game bird is a native of Asia, first successfully stocked in this country in Oregon in 1881. Pennsylvania's first effort to permanently establish the ringneck was in 1915. The brightly-colored iridescent male takes off with a loud cackle when flushed. Hen pheasants are much better camouflaged in brown and black. Favorite habitat: grain fields, meadows, bushy fencerows, open marshes, old weedfields and pastures. Eats at least 56 species of plant foods and many insects; quite fond of corn.



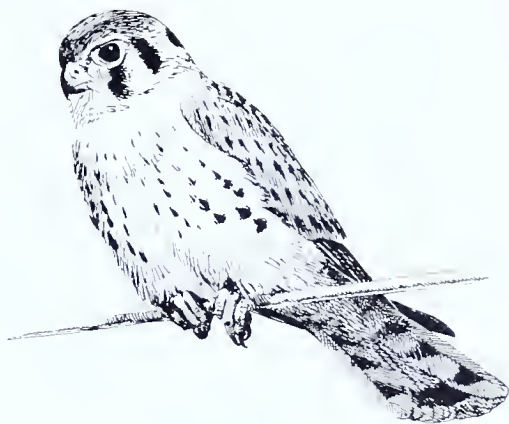
RIVER OTTER

Intelligent, playful, sleek, powerful—all describe river otters. Less plentiful than they once were, otters need clean water and freedom from too much human disturbance. An adult otter is about three feet long with a one-foot tail. A blunt muzzle contains sharp teeth for eating aquatic animals and plants. Otters are shy and are active mostly at night, so are seldom seen. Some fishermen resent their eating occasional game fish (otters eat more crayfish and small nongame fish); others feel otters are worth a trout now and then.



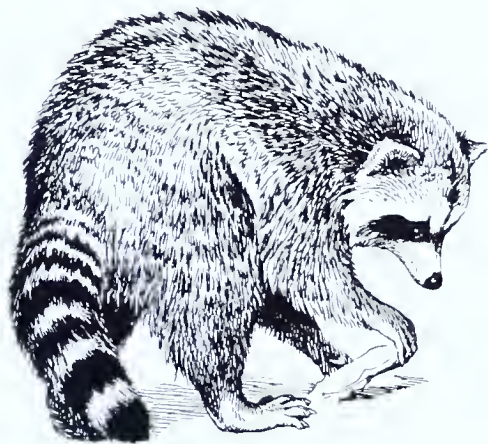
AMERICAN KESTREL

Smallest but most colorful Pennsylvania falcon, often seen perched on telephone wires watching for prey. The robin-size kestrel has a rusty back, speckled breast, gray forehead and black whisker- and ear-marks; males have blue-gray wings, females rusty wings. Nests in tree cavities or nest boxes; sometimes in building eaves. Kestrels prefer to eat insects, especially grasshoppers, but will also eat small mammals, reptiles and birds. You may see one hovering above a field, then dropping on prey. Call, a distinctive *killy-killy-killy*.



RACCOON

The "masked bandit" who raids suburban garbage cans and camp food boxes. Active at night, the 'coon usually stays near water. He often "washes" food before eating. Food is varied: fruits, nuts, corn, insects, grain, eggs, crayfish. Most adults weigh 14-18 pounds. Young are born blind and naked in early April, 3-6 per litter, and stay with mother until late fall. 'Coons sleep deeply in winter, but don't actually hibernate. Hollow trees make good dens. During the day, you may see one asleep in a high tree-crotch. Raccoon fur is valuable, and the flesh is edible.



DOWNY WOODPECKER

Most abundant of our woodpeckers, this little sparrow-sized bird with black and white wings and white back is well-known to outdoorsmen. The male has a red patch on his head. Call is a soft *pik*; most common sound is the *tap-tap-tap* of a downy looking for beetle eggs and grubs. True friends of foresters, woodpeckers help control wood-destroying insects, and hollow out nests only in the softer wood of dead or dying limbs. Abandoned woodpecker nests are often used by other birds and mammals. The hairy woodpecker is almost a twin, but a few inches bigger.





FLYING SQUIRREL

Despite its name, this squirrel doesn't really fly, but glides from high to lower points using skin stretched between front and hind legs. Silky brown-furred back, white belly and big black eyes make him most appealing. The eastern species is a bit smaller and lighter than a chipmunk; the northern species is chipmunk-size. Both live in wooded areas but are seldom seen because they're only active at night. One or two litters of blind, naked young are born yearly in tree-cavity nests. Food is varied: seeds, nuts, berries, insects, sometimes mice, small birds and eggs.

RUFOUS-SIDED TOWHEE

Despite its obscure-sounding name, this is a common bird of brushy woods, often mistaken for a robin. Its red, however, is just on the sides, not the whole breast. Neek, head and back are black in males, brown in females. It sings *DRINK-your-TEA* repeatedly, trilling the *tea*. The towhee (pronounced TOE-he) scratches through leaves on the ground looking for insects and seeds, and hops from bush to bush in the undergrowth, making lots of noise. Some individuals remain in Pennsylvania all year.



MUSKRAT



Looking something like a cross between a beaver and a vole—and about midway between them in size—is this mammal of marshes, ponds and streams. Primarily a vegetarian specializing in cattails, the muskrat will also eat small animals. The muskrat is a prolific breeder. Home may be a lodge of mud and plant material in shallow water, or a burrow in pond- or streambank. Burrows may damage ponds; fortunately, muskrat fur is valuable, and a good way to solve such problems is to invite in a responsible trapper to thin the 'rat population.



SCREECH OWL

Small (about eight inches) but very common owl, with ear-tufts and yellow eyes. Mottled; color varies from reddish to brownish to gray (gray is most common in Pennsylvania). Year-round resident in lightly wooded areas and suburbs. Nests in tree cavities or nest boxes, and will defend nest fearlessly, attacking humans which venture near. Mostly nocturnal; flies silently. Eats small mammals (mostly mice); also insects, small reptiles, house sparrows. Voice: a quavering, descending wail, heard most often at dusk.

MEADOW VOLE

Called "meadow mice" by some, the several species of voles have chunkier heads and bodies, shorter tails, and smaller ears than mice. Adult meadow voles are dark brown, about five inches long with a 1½-inch tail. They are found almost everywhere in the state where there is tall grass, through which they clear runways at ground level. Many of Pennsylvania's meat-eaters depend on voles as a basic diet. Even black bears munch on an occasional vole. Meadow voles eat grasses, seeds, field crops and fruits; in winter, they'll sometimes eat bark.



GREAT BLUE HERON

The heron is a large wading bird with long legs and neck. The great blue is about three feet tall, with a gray-blue body, white head and black "eyebrow" plume. Herons walk slowly through fresh- or salt-water shallows hunting fish, frogs, and crustaceans; they may also eat small mammals and reptiles. Nest in trees, in colonies called "rookeries." In Pennsylvania, great blues breed mostly in northwestern counties. Call, a hoarse squawk. The neck is crooked in flight. Some individuals remain through winter on open water, though most migrate south.

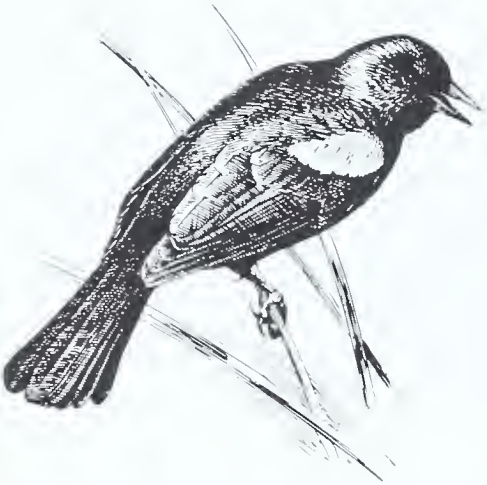
LONG-TAILED WEASEL

One of three weasels in the state, all of which have long, slender bodies. This species has a long, black-tipped tail; head and body are about 1-1½ feet long (females, slightly smaller). Some individuals turn white in winter except for the tail-tip; most remain brown. Usually nocturnal, the weasel may sometimes move around in daytime; in winter, weasel tracks are often seen in the snow. Hairless and blind young (5 or 6) are born in a burrow in May. The weasel's appetite for small rodents makes him a welcome guest; he may also eat insects, frogs, snakes and birds.



RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD

Hot afternoon on the marsh, buzzy insect noises in the air, and a loud *O-ka-REEE*, trilled on the last note, spells "red-winged blackbird." This striking black bird with the red and yellow epaulets is almost the spirit of the marsh, though you may also find him in drier fields and pastures. Females and young are streaky brown, but often with a bit of red on their shoulders, too. They eat many insects, especially weevils and caterpillars, and weed seeds; in winter, banded together with other blackbirds in great flocks, they may eat grain.



EASTERN MOLE

Most of us know moles, if not from experience with them or their burrows, then at least as the "Mr. Mole" of numerous children's stories. He's always chubby and near-sighted—like the real-life mole with his stubby 6-inch body and tiny eyes. He has no external ears, but makes up for a lack there with jumbo-size front paws for burrowing. His plushy fur is slate-gray. Though moles irritate homeowners by tunneling through lawns, they also eat lawn-damaging grubs and insects and aerate the soil.



RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

Lucky is the person who spies this three-inch bit of brightness hovering insectlike near a blossom. Only the male has the bright-red throat; both sexes are iridescent green above and white below. The call is a rapid squeak, but you may also hear their high-speed wings "humming" in flight. Food is insects and nectar, especially from tubular red or orange flowers; easily lured to red sugar-water feeders. The nest is a tiny cup fashioned of floss from milkweed and other plants, held together with spider or tentworm silk, and covered with bits of lichen. It holds eggs (usually two) the size of small beans.

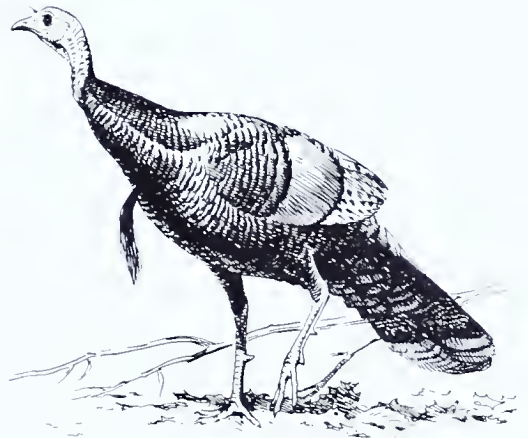


DEER MOUSE

This and the similar white-footed mouse are probably the most abundant mammals in Pennsylvania. They may enter houses in the fall and be mistaken for house mice. The deer mouse has huge black eyes, large ears, fawn-colored back, white belly and paws, and a furred tail; the house mouse is grayer, has a gray belly and naked tail. The deer mouse eats seeds, fruits and insects, and is tidy. Its nest is a ball of soft material. This dainty mouse is 7-8 inches long, including tail. Up to four litters (3-7 young each) may be born annually.

WILD TURKEY

Our biggest upland game bird; a male (gobbler) may weigh 15 pounds or more. Distinguished from domestic turkeys by the brown tips on tailfeathers (domestics' are white). The "beard" of modified feathers is seldom found on hens. The male gobblers and struts to attract females, fanning his tail and drooping his wings to the ground. Turkeys are usually found in or near the woods; young birds (poult) spend much time in clearings where they feed on insects. Later, they'll eat fruit, nuts, grains and green plants. Turkeys avoid flying but do it surprisingly well.





GRAY SQUIRREL

The nickname "bushytail" refers to his fluffy tail, almost as long as his body, which lends balance in his amazing acrobatics. Grizzled gray (more or less rusty along the back) with a white belly. The black color phase is common in northern Pennsylvania. The hind legs are powerful, the front paws dainty and agile for handling nuts, seeds, fruits, and occasional insects and mushrooms. Squirrels may build temporary "nests"—balls of leaves and twigs high in a tree. Young (4-5) are born in a tree cavity or manmade nest box. Adults weigh about 1-1½ pounds. The meat is quite tasty.

BLACK-CAPPED CHICKADEE

Every hunter, hiker, and skier probably knows this pert little grey-white-and-black bundle of woodland energy. They've enjoyed his curiosity—he'll edge closer and closer if you remain quite still—and his bright *TSICK-dee-dee-dee* which enlivens the winter woods. He's around all year long, but is most noticeable in winter when many other birds have departed for sunnier places. He's often seen with nuthatches, titmice and downy woodpeckers in winter. Insects fuel his fires; he's a great benefit to farmers and foresters.



SNOWSHOE HARE



The snowshoe gets his name from his big feet, made bigger in winter by thick, coarse fur. He also changes from brown in summer to white in winter. Unlike rabbits, hares are born fully furred, with eyes open. But like rabbits (and deer), they eat mostly green plants in summer, woody browse (twigs, buds and bark) in winter. Hares like high-elevation swamps, brushy areas, and mixed hardwoods and conifers. Mature forests don't suit them well, one reason they're less common now than right after the big logging boom.

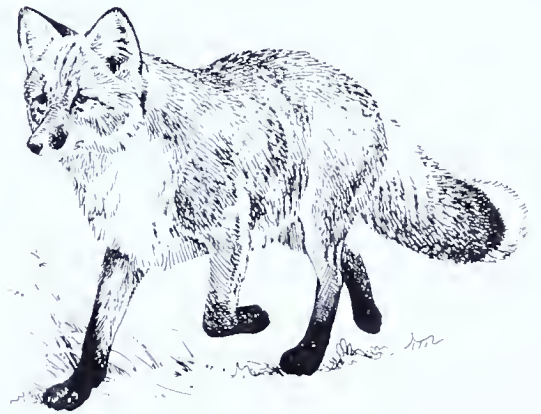


COMMON NIGHTHAWK

At dusk, except in winter, you may hear a buzzy, nasal *peent*. Search the sky and you may find this relative of the whippoorwill flying high on long, pointed wings, which are dark with white patches. It will be catching enormous quantities of insects in its wide, bristle-lined mouth. Prefers open country, suburbs and towns. Lays eggs on gravel, often on gravel-covered rooftops, and may be seen sitting lengthwise (most birds perch crosswise) on tree limbs during the day. Common as a breeding resident in summer, and during migrations in spring and fall.

RED FOX

Spirited *Reynard* of the fox chase, with a handsome red coat, black ears and legs, and white throat, belly and tail-tip. Length: 3-3½ feet, including a bushy 16-inch tail. The female is slightly smaller than the male. Favorite habitat is rolling farmland interspersed with woods. This fox may dig its own den or use old woodchuck burrows. Usually 4-7 pups are born in April, with woolly fur but eyes closed. Both parents care for pups. Red foxes eat small mammals and birds; also eggs, fruit, and insects. The bark sounds like a small dog. Fur is quite valuable.



HORNED GREBE

Grebes are water birds with pointed bills and lobed (not webbed) feet, which sometimes swim low in the water. The horned grebe in summer has a dark body and head, red neck, and bushy tan plumes ("horns") behind the eyes; in winter, a dark back and head, with white chin and neck. Grebes summer on lakes and marshes, winter on salt water and the Great Lakes. The feet are set far back, and grebes can take off only from water. Young may ride on the parents' backs. Grebes dive for most of their food of small fish, crustaceans, insects, tadpoles, and lizards.

MINK

A long, slender, dark-brown mammal related to weasels and famous for its soft, lustrous fur. About two feet long, weighing 1-1½ pounds, minks have strong scent glands like other mustelids (weasels, skunks, otters). Usually found near water, but tracks in snow show they roam the winter woods. Minks eat fish, frogs, crayfish, small mammals, birds, insects and snakes. A mink may den under a large tree, in a muskrat lodge or in a streambank burrow. Four to eight young are born in April, naked and blind. Domestic minks are raised on "ranches."



STARLING

This bird is so common here that it's hard to believe it's not native to the United States, but was brought in from Europe in 1890. First introduced into New York's Central Park, it had reached Pennsylvania by 1904. Now it roosts, often on city buildings, by the tens of thousands and may be a real nuisance. Starlings drive native birds such as bluebirds from their nest cavities. On the other hand, they eat a lot of insects. Starlings are iridescent black with a yellow bill in summer; black speckled with white, with a dark bill in winter.



BEAVER

One of the world's largest rodents, the beaver may weigh up to 60 pounds. Webbed hind feet propel him through water; a broad flat tail serves as rudder. Gone from Pennsylvania before white settlers arrived, beaver were restocked beginning in 1917, protected for a while, and now have healthy, trappable populations. They build dams to create ponds in which they build lodges, or may build streambank burrows. Food is the inner bark of trees. Usually four kits are born in May, fully furred and with eyes open. Beavers have long been prized for their fine fur.



EASTERN BLUEBIRD

Once a common sight in the Pennsylvania countryside, the bluebird has dwindled in the past half-century. Among the many reasons for its decline are loss of tree-cavity nesting spots, and competition for the few sites from house sparrows and starlings. Many outdoorsmen erect suitable bluebird nest boxes in an effort to bring back this lovely little bird with the voracious appetite for insects. Boxes must be the exact size to let bluebirds in and keep competitors out. Both sexes are blue, with reddish throat and breast, but the male is much brighter. Favorite habitat is open farmland and roadsides. Call, a soft warble.



OPOSSUM

Only North American "pouched" or marsupial mammal. (The kangaroo is an Australian marsupial.) Up to 18 young are born naked and blind, each smaller than a honeybee. They climb up to mother's pouch, where they live 4-6 weeks, attached to nipples. Opossums live in open woods, swamps and wastelands. Bed is a nest of leaves in a hollow log, tree cavity, or burrow. They eat almost anything: fruits, nuts, corn, worms, insects, frogs, snakes, birds, small mammals, eggs. Most weigh 4-10 pounds. The flesh is edible, and the fur is used for trimmings.



RED-TAILED HAWK

The most common hawk, a year-round resident of our state, is the redtail. As you might guess from its name, its most striking characteristic is a rusty-red tail. Spread in flight, with sun shining down through it, that tail is quite striking; when conditions are not so good, however, it may not look red at all. The back and upper wings are brown, the underparts more or less speckled but with a distinct band of darker speckles across the belly. Often seen perched in a tree near open country, or soaring above, searching with sharp eyes for small rodents.



TURKEY VULTURE

An unattractive bird with an unpleasant odor; yet immensely valuable. Vultures eat carrion; you might call them the garbage disposers of the bird world. What a mess we'd have without them! Common in summer; some stay through winter in southeastern and occasionally southwestern counties. Large, black bird with naked red head. High, soaring flight; wingspread about six feet; wings are black in front, light gray at tips and back, characteristically held in a shallow V rather than straight out. Nests in rock crevices or hollow logs.



STRIPED SKUNK

All mustelids have scent glands, but the skunk's the champ! If he feels threatened and raises his hind end, watch out for a potent-smelling defense. Weighing about 2½-7 pounds, this skunk is black with a V-shaped white stripe and bushy tail. Found often near farmlands, where he digs a den or uses an old 'chuck hole to sleep in during the day and in very cold weather. Kits are born in late March, naked but with the stripe pattern showing on their skin. Foods: insects, fruits, grains, small rodents, eggs. Fur is sometimes used in coats.



MOCKINGBIRD

"King of Songs" could be his title—or "The Great Pretender." He's a long-tailed bird, dark gray above, light gray beneath, with white patches on wings and tail. He sings almost constantly, especially on clear spring nights, imitating many bird songs as well as other animal sounds, whistles, creaking doors, musical instruments, and so on. Some folks find this annoying; others, a source of continual amusement and pleasure. The singing male prefers a high perch—often a television antenna. Food: insects and wild fruits. Rare here in earlier years; now fairly common in southern Pennsylvania.



The following literature is available from

Pennsylvania Game Commission

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